

IN THE LOOP

Updates for the ISPP Community

Greetings ISPP Community and Friends!

Lately in my weekly messages to the program and in my daily living - I have been focusing on hope. It's hard to hold on to hope when everything seems to be falling apart.

The effects of climate change are rapidly increasing and threatening vulnerable populations the most; systemic racism and oppression continue to show up on a daily basis; our country is rife with division; there is a mass shooting more than once a day in this country; people are hurting and we don't have enough mental health care providers to take care of folks; and many in the helping industries (healthcare providers, childcare providers, teachers, and many others) are stretched thin, underappreciated, or burned out. It's so easy to succumb to hopelessness and despair. And yet - to despair is to give myself a pass. It's an option that I, in a place of privilege, can so easily slip into.

Hope is a choice. A leap of faith. An act of will. I remind myself, and am regularly reminded by others, that I must be willing to hope.

In our Antiracism and Intersectionality Workgroup meetings, we have been reading and discussing Rebecca Solnit's book *Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities* (if you haven't read this - I recommend it!).

This reading - and especially my weekly conversations with the group members - have helped me focus on and commit to hope.



I also find hope in my daily interactions within the ISPP community. Talking to students, faculty, staff, alumni, prospective students - all of this gives me hope. Each time I am reminded that I am not alone and that there is a whole community of folks who are striving to make our community and our world a little better. When we add the number of ISPP alumni and current students, we have close to 2,000 people. If, on average, folks are providing 20 hours per week of clinical work, consultation, teaching, and/or supervision - that is more than 2 million hours. That's a lot of hope being enacted and a lot of reason to hope right there!

We so often focus on all that is wrong in the world (and there is a lot), that we miss all that is right. When I pause to reflect on that, I am filled with hope. As you scan this winter newsletter and read the interviews with our student Mandinder Kaur Singh and our alum Dr. Taylor Levitt - I hope you, too, find hope.

Sending my best to our ISPP community,
Leah

ISPP Alumna Spotlight- Dr. Taylor Levitt

Taylor Levitt, Psy.D. is a 2022 graduate of the Illinois School of Professional Psychology at National Louis University. She is currently working as a postdoctoral fellow at Fox Clinical Services in St. Charles, IL. She has worked with children, adolescents, and adults in community, hospital, and private practice settings providing therapeutic services as well as neuropsychological and psychological evaluations.

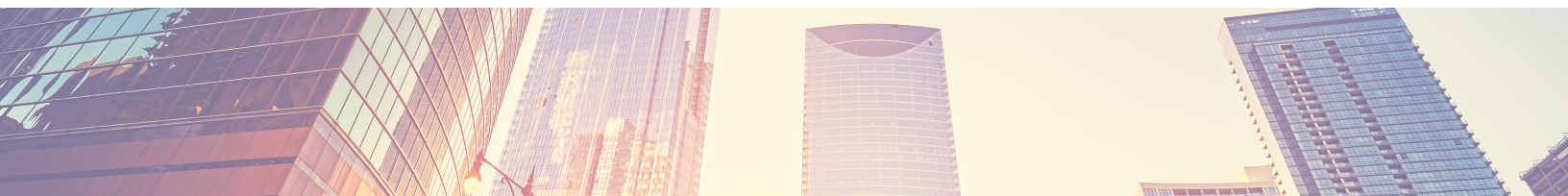


How did you get interested in psychology?

I have been exposed to the field of psychology since a young age. Both of my parents worked in the field in different roles, and so I have had opportunities to learn about working in the field for most of my life. However, my parents always encouraged me to find my own path, and when I would talk to them about pursuing psychology as a career, they would tell me how rewarding the work can be but that it is also very difficult work. When I was in high school, I took an introduction to psychology course, and was enraptured. I took psychology and sociology courses at my undergraduate university and was fascinated by what I was learning. However, I was worried about whether I could truly handle pursuing psychology as a career knowing that the additional schooling I would need would be challenging, and I was afraid that I would not be able to emotionally handle the work. So, I considered switching my major to business, and I took more business classes. I was so incredibly bored, it was almost painful to go to those classes. I found myself stuck and unsure what to do and reached out to my advisor at the time. His advice, which has always stayed with me, was, "use your data." I began the application for graduate school shortly after that, and here I am now, working as a psychologist and loving what I do!

What has been the most challenging aspect of your training?

The most challenging aspect of my training has been the internal work I have had to do. I have had to learn how to balance caring for my clients while not taking on their pain as my own. I have also learned how to balance feelings of helplessness and hopefulness. When you do this work, you learn that there is very little we have control over, such as people's access to resources and what happens outside of your work with them. There have been times where feelings of helplessness would start to overpower my feelings of hope, and I had to learn how to acknowledge and accept what I do not have control over while still holding onto hope that positive changes can be made. Another important lesson I had to learn was how to deal with uncertainty and being okay with making mistakes. As someone who has struggled with anxiety for most of my life, this was extremely difficult, and I learned very quickly that this work is full of uncertainty and you are going to make many mistakes along the way. Over time, I learned how to open myself up to opportunities to make mistakes because those were the times when I learned the most. If I could give any piece of advice to future and current students, it would be to allow yourself to make mistakes, talk to someone about it when you do, learn from it, forgive yourself, and keep moving forward. It is worth it, and you will find yourself becoming a better clinician and person because of it.



ISPP Community Gatherings

All Community Gatherings are held on Tuesdays at 1:45 PM.

February 21st – Dr. Lucia Lopez presents on compassion fatigue and burn-out prevention

March 7th- Town Hall Community Gathering

March 21st- Conversation with the Dean of the College of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences, Dr. Kelli Johnson

NLU Counseling and Wellness Center

NLU's Counseling and Wellness Center has moved into a new space to better accommodate students. Stop by Suite 3013 on the 3rd Floor of 122 S. Michigan to check out their new space!

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ISPP/ NLU Graduation

The ISPP/NLU Graduation will be held on Saturday, June 24th, 2023 beginning at 10 AM at the Wintrust Area in Chicago, IL.

Students must have the CRP FINAL DRAFT complete and submitted to the library by 4/30 to participate in graduation.

Doctoral Ceremony information

The doctoral ceremony will be held in the evening of June 12th. It is a formal event recognizing the achievements of all doctoral graduates from NLU. During the ceremony, the student's faculty mentor will place the doctoral hood on the graduate, honoring their successful completion of the doctoral degree.

[RSVP by 5/22.](#)

ISPP Student Research Day

The National Louis University Doctoral Research Symposium is an annual virtual event that showcases the outstanding scholarship and research conducted by NLU's doctoral candidates from multiple disciplines. The 2023 symposium will be held on May 11, 2023, from 4:30-7:00 pm CST (5:30-8:00 EST).

If you have any questions about this event, please email DocSymposium@nl.edu

ISPP 2022-2023 CLAVE Doctoral Fellows

The Centro de Excelencia at National Louis University serves as a hub for programs and initiatives to advance our work as a Hispanic and Minority Serving Institution.

CLAVE is an acronym for “Colaborando con las comunidades Latinx para avanzar en educación.” In English, this translates to Collaborating with Latinx communities to advance education. The purpose of the CLAVE Graduate Student Institute is to increase the retention and graduation of Latinx and BIPOC masters and doctoral students. The activities of the CLAVE Graduate Student Institute are supported by the Promoting Post Baccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans (PPOHA) grant.

A key activity of the CLAVE Graduate Student Institute is the CLAVE Doctoral Fellowship. The CLAVE Doctoral Fellowship is designed to develop, retain, and support exemplary Latinx and BIPOC doctoral scholars at NLU. Fellowship recipients receive financial tuition assistance, individual and group mentorship, and opportunities to teach a graduate-level course and participate in research with a current NLU faculty member.

Congratulations to the ISPP students who were awarded the 2022-2023 CLAVE Doctoral Fellowship!

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Katie Alvarez



Israh Ibrahim



Nashali Miranda- Cardona

**ISPP Student
Eva Valdez
awarded the
HPSP
scholarship!**

Congratulations to 2nd-year PsyD student Eva Valdez, on being awarded the HPSP scholarship. This is a highly selective and competitive award!

The Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP) is one of the most comprehensive scholarships available in the healthcare field, covering recipients' full tuition for an advanced medical degree while also providing a monthly stipend.

ISPP Current Student Spotlight- Maninder Kaur Singh

Maninder is a 1st-year student in the Psy.D. program at the Illinois School of Professional Psychology (ISPP). She earned her MSc in Rehabilitation Counseling from the University at Buffalo, and a BSc in Psychology with Honours and a Bachelor of Environmental Studies with Honours, both from York University in Toronto, ON. She is also the CEO of Happy Hearts Counselling Services in Toronto, ON, where she works as a Mental Health Counselor.

How did you get interested in psychology?

I have always had a passion to help others. This comes from my upbringing as I was exposed to the beauty of helping others since I was a little girl. When I went to university, I took Psychology 101 as an elective, but ended up falling in love with the field. Overtime, I explored other career options, but continuously found myself drawn towards the Psychology field. What fascinates me the most about the field is how the mind works, factors influencing human behaviour, mental wellness, and long-term effects of trauma on the individual's wellbeing and their brain functions. Another reason why I am interested in Psychology is because of the lack of awareness and low representation of mental wellness in the South Asian community. As someone who identifies as a Sikh woman, I am proud to represent my community, and I see myself working within the community to help South Asians to focus on mental wellness.

Please tell us about a recent accomplishment that's meaningful to you.

A recent accomplishment that is meaningful to me is becoming a Teacher Assistant (TA) for one of the classes at National Louis University. It is a dream of mine to become a professor and to teach a university level course. And becoming a TA is a huge stepping-stone towards achieving my dream. When my professor reached out to offer me such a great opportunity, it made me feel recognized. When she allowed me to support and teach parts of the class, it felt like she believed in me and trusted my capabilities. I not only felt accomplished, but I also felt confident in my professional capabilities.



Where do you see yourself in 5 years? What are your professional goals?

In 5 years, I see myself as a recent graduate from NLU's Doctorate program in Clinical Psychology (PsyD), and I would be practicing as a Psychologist. Last year, I started my own private practice as a Mental Health Counsellor, and I see myself growing that practice as a Professional Psychologist. My practice is called Happy Hearts Counselling Services (www.happyheartscs.com). Lastly, in 5 years, I see myself teaching a course at a well-respected university, hopefully National Louis University.

Do you have any advice for prospective students?

There are so many opportunities that come towards us, but we may not take the leap of faith due to fear of the unknown and fear of failing. I advise you to take the leap of faith and do the things that scare you! Try, fail, pick yourself up, learn from your mistakes, and try again! Life is all about experiencing the journey and rarely about the destination <3
PS: It is okay to be scared! Do it anyway...

Congratulations to our ISPP Student Presenters!

Hilary Hines presented her CRP/Dissertation in a poster presentation at the International Council of Psychologists. Her poster is titled: *Veteran Perceptions/Attitudes of the VA and Treatment Seeking Intentions*.

Monica Zabinski presented her CRP/Dissertation in a poster presentation at the International Council of Psychologists. Her poster is titled: *Polish Immigrants And The Acculturation Of Racial Beliefs*.

Congratulations to Hilary and Monica!

Winter Term AIWG Meetings

Join the Antiracism and Intersectionality Work Group (AIWG) for a critical conversation about racism, antiracism, allyship, white identity, and how that impacts you as a clinician or future clinician.

Meetings will be held every Wednesday night from 7-8 PM CST.

<https://nl.zoom.us/j/92136874153>

Looking for a copy of your CRP? Email Laura Zuniga, lzuniga4@nl.edu.

ISPP Alumna, Dr. Angelina Witbeck, to serve as keynote panelist



Dr. Angelina Witbeck will participate as a keynote panelist in the upcoming NLU Doctoral Research Symposium on Thursday, May 11.

Dr. Witbeck graduated with her doctorate in clinical psychology with an emphasis in neuropsychology from ISPP at NLU in 2022. She completed her predoctoral internship within the North Texas VA Healthcare System in Dallas, Texas, and is now completing her postdoctoral fellowship in clinical neuropsychology at Wellstar Health System in Atlanta, Georgia, an APPCN accredited program. Clinically, she works primarily with the adult and geriatric populations, providing comprehensive neuropsychological evaluations and plans to subspecialize within the pediatric population. Dr. Witbeck's research interests include motivation for lifestyle changes to reduce the risk for developing dementia as well as implementation of caregiver support programs to promote caregiver well-being in order to improve quality of life for patients and their families.