Policy Roundtable: Institute on Social Exclusion Hosts Regional Event on Community Development and Health

The Adler School of Professional Psychology Institute on Social Exclusion (ISE) hosted a Policy Roundtable this summer to create plans for taking action on health in all policies, community capacity building, and community assessment and planning.

At the July 10 event at the Adler School’s Chicago campus, participants discussed how systems can assist individuals and communities—working in partnership with foundations, business, and government entities—in developing locally based solutions that promote health equity.

Attendees included community and business leaders, policymakers, foundation leaders, public health and mental health leaders, and public officials from across the Chicago metropolitan area. The event was made possible through the generosity of corporate sponsors that support the education of policymakers and community stakeholders on the importance of considering physical and mental health in all policies.

“Marice Ashe, Founder and CEO of ChangeLab Solutions, provided the roundtable’s keynote address. She has launched a number of groundbreaking efforts to improve public health through the use of law and policy. ChangeLab Solutions builds the capacity of leaders across the nation to address a range of chronic diseases through practical policy solutions.

Ashe explained that in order to instigate change, we need to adopt a systems thinking and interdisciplinary approach. “We can use health as a bridge across the community to talk in a multidisciplinary way,” she said. She introduced the idea of identifying or forming a backbone organization as a model that Chicago community leaders and funders can adopt to align the work of the community with mutual goals. She added that “change will not happen and be institutionalized without policy action.”

Following Ashe’s keynote address, Grace Hou, President of Woods Fund Chicago, spoke on approaches to building community capacity through collective power and collaboration. She spoke from a foundation perspective on the gap in funding available for policy change. “Education and health are the top funding priorities of Illinois; civil rights and social actions are at the bottom,” Hou said. She added that “when words need to be pushed beyond words and into action, that’s when there’s a big cliff.”

Morning presentations concluded with a talk by Jonathan Heller, Co-Director and Founder of Human Impact Partners, a national leader in the field of health impact assessment (HIA). He spoke on the benefits of HIA as a practice and how a health in all policies approach can lead to better health outcomes. As a process, “[HIA] reporting provides better evidence for legislation, highlighting inequities, and providing recommendations.” Heller added that “the process is engaging and empowers the community, recognizes lived experiences, allows for relationship building and collaboration, and improves transparency in decision making.”
The afternoon consisted of a panel presentation and open discussion. The panel was moderated by **Margie Schaps**, Executive Director of Health and Medicine Policy Research Group.

She opened the conversation with comments about the importance of taking a systems approach and working across disciplines. She shared some startling local statistics: “Chicago is as segregated as it gets. There is a 17-year difference in life expectancy between lowest socioeconomic zip code and the highest socioeconomic zip code.” She also spoke about the impacts of political cycles: “Ronald Reagan talked about starving the beast. This led to less government influence and aid. So, people blame the government when systems don’t work. This is a terrible cycle.”

Panel members included **Michael Berry**, Director of Policy Studies, the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago; **Wendy DuBoe**, President and CEO, United Way of Metropolitan Chicago; **Maricela Garcia**, Chief Executive Officer, Gads Hill Center (an ISE community partner); and **Juan Salgado**, President and CEO, Instituto del Progress Latino and a member of the Adler School Board of Trustees.

According to the panelists, the trend of funding healthy community development is moving to a collective impact approach that brings together donors with schools and communities, to provide neighborhood-specific solutions to unique community challenges.

Community organizations are the front line to these challenges, and they have been operating with very few resources. They are now working to engage people in advocacy.

Following the panel, participants engaged in small group discussions to identify steps toward meaningful collaboration across sectors. The day closed with a recap of the small and large group discussions that focused on identifying the characteristics of a backbone organization and actions to be taken.

Attendees overwhelmingly agreed that more interdisciplinary discussions on the importance of policy-level interventions must continue. Many expressed interest in getting more involved in collective collaborations and civic engagement. Many ideas were shared during the all-day event.

A final report is being compiled by the ISE team and will be distributed soon.

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**Adler Students Reflect on the Policy Roundtable**

“What I enjoyed most about the roundtable was the focus on both education and action—instead of giving participants’ information and hoping they would spread it to their colleagues and community. We discussed concrete steps that could be put into place in order to make the impact as significant as possible.”

—**Meredith Chambers**, Student, Masters of Arts in Counseling: Specialization in Forensic Psychology program

“It was such a milestone to have a multidisciplinary group convene, because everyone has different viewpoints, but everyone was able to contribute their expertise in a respectful and meaningful manner.”

—**Allyn Bishop**, Institute on Social Exclusion Intern and student of the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health

“As a student in public health, it is important to see how overarching decisions, seemingly unrelated to health, can have drastic health consequences. Moreover, trying to influence systematic change can seem overwhelming and daunting.”

—**Channa Lindsay**, Institute on Social Exclusion Intern and student of the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health

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Tiffany McDowell, Ph.D., M.F.T., has been named Executive Director of the ISE, leading ongoing education, advocacy, and research on social determinants of mental health, health impact assessment, and social exclusion.

“I am particularly interested in building the capacity of community organizations and residents to advocate for policy change,” said McDowell, a licensed marriage and family therapist and recognized community researcher and activist.

McDowell’s recent and ongoing projects with the ISE include development of a Community-Supported Violence Prevention Strategy in Chicago’s Grand Boulevard, Kenwood, and Washington Park communities; a health impact assessment (HIA) or proposed redevelopment plans for the sites of Chicago’s decommissioned Fisk and Crawford coal power plants; and a Mental Health Impact Assessment (MHIA) on the use of arrest records in employment decisions.

McDowell joined the ISE as research associate and core faculty member in 2011. Prior to joining the Adler School, she was assistant director of research and programs at the Center for Closing the Health Gap in Cincinnati. There, she developed and evaluated community health interventions to reduce disparities in obesity. She also completed research for the City of Cincinnati Food Access Task Force and the National Alliance on Mental Illness-Hamilton County (Ohio), and taught at The Ohio State University, Miami University, and Cincinnati State Technical and Community College.

McDowell holds a doctorate in couple and family therapy from The Ohio State University. She earned a master’s in family and child studies at Miami University, and her baccalaureate in psychology at Southern University and A&M College.

Institute on Public Safety and Social Justice: News and Updates

Restorative Justice Conference

Leaders in Chicago’s restorative justice (RJ) community organized a Restorative Justice Conference on Race and Trauma, June 24-26 at Roosevelt University. The convening of 150 active RJ practitioners, both youth and adults, focused on deepening collective skills to address issues of race and trauma, which are believed to underlie much of the violence and dysfunction in communities and schools.

Conference sessions were designed to enhance RJ practitioners’ understanding of the intellectual and emotional complexities of race, and mechanisms that support structural racism. Sessions focused on the historical trauma and violence experienced by many of the youth and families that the Adler School Institute on Public Safety and Social Justice (IPSSJ) serves, as well as resiliency factors. Practitioners came together as a community to build understanding and experience in using needs-based restorative practices to address harm, support healing and work towards individual and structural change.

Guest speakers included national and local leaders Shakti Butler, Kay Pranis, Rita Alfred, Constance Sheehan, Carlos Rodriguez, and Troy Harden. They provided learning opportunities through circles and dialogue workshops, film, self-inquiry, self-care, art and music.

The conference was part of IPSSJ’s ongoing goal to expand and strengthen metropolitan Chicago’s RJ and peacemaking capacity to create safe spaces for stakeholders to constructively engage and grapple with justice-related issues. The three-day conference was the beginning of the process of preparing practitioners to facilitate dialogues on race and trauma; IPSSJ plans follow-up workshops, training, and coaching sessions to support RJ practitioners as they work to address, transform, and advocate for racial justice; our goal is to significantly contribute to the transformation of individuals, communities, and schools.

For more information, contact the IPSSJ at IPSSJ@adler.edu.
STAR Training

From July 28 through August 1, the Adler School Institute on Public Safety and Social Justice (IPSSJ), Dominican University, and North Park University co-sponsored STAR training for restorative justice (RJ) practitioners, youth workers, and students from throughout the Chicagoland area.

STAR is a research-supported trauma awareness and resilience training program developed through the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University. Since 2001, STAR has brought together theory and practices from neurobiology, conflict transformation, human security, spirituality, and restorative justice to address the needs of trauma-impacted individuals and communities.

The training combines lectures with experiential and interactive activities. Learning takes place through presentations, physical activity, creative expression, and interaction with other participants.

STAR training focuses on:
- Trauma overview, definitions and types of trauma
- Effects of trauma: emotional, cognitive, physical, spiritual, behavioral
- Unhealed trauma and cycles of victimhood and violence: acting in and acting out
- Tools and processes for address trauma: body, mind, spirit; restorative justice; and conflict transformation
- Resilience and self-care, both-individual and collective

STAR is for individuals and organizations whose work brings them in contact with populations dealing with current or historic trauma. This includes mental health, medical and legal professionals; social workers; clergy; educators; peace-builders; humanitarian, human rights and development workers; and all those who need to be trauma-informed in order to provide trauma-sensitive programming. There is no prerequisite knowledge or study required to effectively participate.

At the end of the training, participants are able to bring a trauma-informed perspective to their personal and professional lives, present basic concepts, and use the tools with their organizations.

For more information about participating in STAR training, visit www.emu.edu/cjp/star/training/level-one.

Safe Schools Consortium

The Safe Schools Consortium is a collaborative of several agencies working to improve the overall culture in four Chicago schools: Alternatives, Inc.; Albany Park Neighborhood Council (APNC), Voices Of Youth in Chicago Education (VOYCE); the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU); and the Institute on Public Safety and Social Justice (IPSSJ). The agencies have partnered in an effort to replace police rooms with peace rooms in Bogan, Douglass, Sullivan, and Team Englewood schools to create a restorative climate.

For too long, overuse of exclusionary discipline such as suspensions, expulsions and arrests in Chicago Public Schools has widened racial disparities in academic opportunity and juvenile justice involvement, while fundamentally failing to make schools and communities safer. Federal civil rights data has shown that Illinois suspends proportionally more African-Americans than any other state, while Chicago Public Schools (CPS) suspends 63% of all African-American students with disabilities at least once. Original research by VOYCE has shown that in the 2010-11 school year, in Chicago, 29 students were arrested on school property every single day, compared to five arrests per day in New York City schools. Of those Chicago students, 97% were of students of color.

Alternatives Inc. and VOYCE have co-convened the Safe Schools Consortium as a unique collaborative aimed at scaling up school discipline approaches that address behavioral problems without pushing students out of school. Working with the Chicago Teachers Union Quest Center, the Safe Schools Consortium has affected educational outcomes for students of color in CPS by developing the teacher leadership needed to transform school-level disciplinary practice and building the student leadership needed to advance key structural reforms throughout the district. The collaboration is innovative because it brings together students, teachers, and practitioners to collectively create and advance the comprehensive approach and multiple strategies needed to maximize positive impact.

The established classroom management and restorative justice trainers at Chicago Teachers Union Quest Center, including Walter Taylor, NBCT, and Alternatives worked together this
year to comprehensively support the four targeted CPS high schools in reducing the number of office, suspension and police referrals, while increasing the use of more effective, non-exclusionary practices. Trainers worked closely with school and teacher leaders at the high schools to integrate proven classroom management and restorative justice practices into both classroom practice and school-level discipline and security efforts. Participating schools also had access to quarterly Consortium-wide meetings to foster data-driven professional learning.

Elena Quintana, Ph.D., Executive Director of IPSSJ, is the lead evaluator for the work of the Safe Schools Consortium, and used surveys, interviews, and school-level data analysis to guide learning, collaboration, and targeted areas for improvement by Consortium staff and schools.

To support continued reductions in the use of exclusionary discipline and its disproportionate impact on students of color, VOYCE brought its proven track record of successful structural reform to the Safe Schools Consortium. VOYCE worked with partners to strategically publish evaluation results from the four target schools, and organized to advance additional district-level reforms—such as placing stronger limits on arrests and increasing public reporting on the use of school discipline—that expand best practices and create the structural conditions for maximum impact.

The unique collaboration is designed to build teacher leadership for whole-school reform while also building student leadership to dismantle structural barriers such as overly punitive policies, lack of sustained investment in successful alternatives, and lack of robust and transparent data on racial disparities in the administration of school discipline, which have previously prevented the expansion of restorative justice practices in Chicago.

Little Black Pearl

Founded in collaboration with Chicago’s Little Black Pearl Workshop, Little Black Pearl Art and Design Academy is a high school that allows students to develop skills in academics, fine arts, and technology. The curriculum is especially designed to incorporate the arts while promoting the development of critical thinking in a safe learning environment as students pursue a high school diploma, post-secondary education, and career opportunities.

The IPSSJ has worked in collaboration with the school this year to evaluate both restorative justice programming and opportunities for family and student engagement, in a combined effort to promote student retention and advancement. Little Black Pearl (LBP) is the recipient of a grant from the Kellogg Foundation to promote the training and advancement of educators of color, a project that is in development and part of the effort that IPSSJ is currently evaluating.

There is tremendous demand to provide educational opportunities for young people who are too often unsuccessful at engaging in traditional high school models, or pushed out of school. The LBP Art and Design Academy has expanded its educational programming to serve these youth in grades 9 through 12, and has made a significant commitment to providing an environment that is engaging culturally, artistically, and academically.

The IPSSJ is proud to partner with LBP Art and Design Academy to learn from the evaluation process in an effort to best serve youth. To learn more, email IPSSJ@adler.edu.
Environmental justice is referred to as “any local response to a threat against community health” (p.14). Agyeman elaborated on the definition of environmental justice by providing the reader with rich historical information, from the first movement in 1982 to the present-day efforts of environmental regulations and justice advocates. The majority of his readings focused on the outcomes of a community-based participatory research project (CBPR) that shed light onto the complicated network of internal and external forces that impacted the development of environmental justice policies and laws. The CBPR project was called the Massachusetts Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (MEJAC), and it was established in October 2002. Modeled after the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, the MEJAC organized public outreach by hosting public meetings, visiting neighborhoods, and attending presentations by activists groups across the state in hopes of showing policymakers a range of environmental justice interests and issues in communities at risk in Massachusetts (p. 28).

Agyeman and colleagues’ conclusions revealed that “hazardous sites and facilities are disproportionality located and concentrated in communities of color and working-class communities” (p. 177). Additionally, these communities are being impacted by the social implications of inequality in other areas, which include public safety concerns, limited job opportunities, and poor environmental conditions. These findings suggested that when the resources and riches of a given society are unequally distributed, the society will not function properly and it will not sustain an appropriate level of health that is conducive to its future well-being.

Agyeman discussed the need for a change in how communities and organizations think about the location and distribution of environmental resources and services. Agyeman provided his readers with ideas and policies that could aid communities in moving toward his notion of “just sustainability.” Specifically, he recommended that better transit systems, community agriculture, eco-taxes, affordable housing, and local exchange schemes should be applied to decrease the economic disparity that exists among racially segregated and low-income neighborhoods (p.108). Furthermore, he highlighted that certain areas have already implemented these ideas. However, these were not the communities which he had originally expected; Agyeman noticed that smaller communities began to embrace the suggested policies instead of larger ones. Subsequently, this outcome contradicted his beliefs, because the most disenfranchised and polluted areas are often within the larger communities.

Here in Chicago, the Institute on Social Exclusion (ISE) is conducting a health impact assessment (HIA) in the Pilsen and Little Village neighborhoods and collaborating with two environmental justice organizations—Pilsen Environmental Rights and Reform Organization (PERRO) and the Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO). In relation to Agyeman’s work, the HIA strives to measure the possible outcomes of community redevelopment. The purpose of the HIA is to make informed predictions for the potential impacts of land repurposing in Pilsen and Little Village. For the past year, the ISE has been collaborating with community residents.
and leaders from these two underserved neighborhoods and collecting information so their voices could help guide the recommendation process.

Julian Agyeman took important action to investigate and identify the components of social equity as it relates to environmental justice and sustainability. His efforts to promote the equality of social conditions through the planning, organizing, and creation of CBPR’s and environmental justice coalitions provides awareness to the public about communities in need. Agyeman acknowledges social injustices across socioeconomic levels and provides readers with insight and knowledge about environmental protection and quality. In addition he highlights the need for long-term sustainability. As students at the Adler School, it is imperative that we advocate for social and policy change through the dissemination of knowledge with colleagues in the field and the community. By doing so, we can advocate for social justice across individual and systemic levels.

Greater Englewood Unity Day Clean Up and Celebration

Members of Chicago’s Englewood community recently hosted the Third Annual Greater Englewood Unity Day Celebration this spring. The Adler School of Professional Psychology was among the several organizations that sponsored the event, involving 200 volunteers: youth, adults, senior citizens, along with volunteer organization members. Community members felt supported in their goal to unite the community and promote peace.

Volunteers met at Imagine Englewood IF, a local nonprofit organization, to pick up gloves, rakes, brooms, trash bags, and other cleaning supplies. They separated into groups and walked neighborhood streets throughout the community picking up litter, including the areas of 69th and Normal, 69th and Halsted, 55th and Damen, and 65th and Peoria.

After cleaning, volunteers and participating organizations returned to Imagine Englewood IF for a celebration, including food, beverages, a bike raffle for kids, and music. High school students earned community service learning hours for participating in the event.

Youth danced and interacted with adults and senior citizens. Others used the time to connect with event sponsors and volunteer organizations to discuss future projects and events.

Imagine Englewood IF Director Sonya Harper was impressed with the level of support the community received, and discussed the idea of implementing more community events throughout the year.

For example, the Resident Association of Greater Engelwood (R.A.G.E.) announced it would host a “So Fresh Saturday” series at Englewood community parks throughout the summer to educate, empower, and provide a safe space for Englewood youth and residents.

For more information about our work in the community, contact us at ISE@adler.edu.
The ISE hosted a Social Exclusion Simulation in June that gave the ISE team the opportunity to become keenly cognizant of an often-overlooked population.

Upon receiving a list of participants for the simulation, the ISE discovered one participant was deaf and required two translators to assist him at the simulation. During the simulation, despite the translators’ presence, the participant experienced significant barriers going through the simulation’s role-play exercise. He emphasized that he could not imagine what it would be like for a deaf individual in prison without a translator.

As a result, the entire group learned about what life might be like for an individual who is deaf and navigating through the prison system.

Simulation guest speaker Twyanda Major, a formerly incarcerated woman who learned sign language while she was in prison, discussed why she developed such a strong passion for learning sign language.

She explained that there was a woman in the cell next to her, who was deaf and illiterate. This became a significant barrier for the woman, because she was allergic to peanuts, and the inmates were given peanut butter and jelly sandwiches on a daily basis. Major explained that she would watch the woman violently shove the sandwiches back under the door in order to prevent herself from experiencing a severe allergic reaction. Due to the lack of communication between the woman, who was deaf, and prison guards, the prison guards determined her behavior was aggressive and non-compliant, and placed her in solitary confinement.

During her time in solitary confinement, the guards continued to provide the woman with peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, which she continued to violently shove back under the door. Because she was already in the most isolated part of the prison, as punishment for her behavior, the prison guards added an extra day to her stay in solitary confinement each time she shoved sandwiches under the door. Major explained the entire situation disgusted her but inspired her to become proficient in sign language as a means to help the woman.

Shortly after the simulation concluded, the ISE received an email from the participant who was deaf. He told the ISE about a documentary campaign titled “Deaf in Prison” to be screened in late June, by an organization called Helping Educate to Advance the Rights of the Deaf (HEARD).

Shortly thereafter, ISE Program Director Kimberly King interviewed Talia Lewis, founder of HEARD.

Lewis reported that “there are thousands of deaf people in jails and prisons across the nation.” She also reported that despite the fact that the American with Disabilities Act and Rehabilitation Act applies to jails and prisons, accommodations and modifications for deaf inmates are neglected on a daily basis. Additionally, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination by any public entity, and applies to state prisons and local jails.

Nonetheless, many deaf prisoners are housed in solitary confinement simply because they are deaf. Lewis reported that “deaf prisoners struggle to understand rules, communicate with officers and prisoners, and perceive what is going on around them.”

Clearly there is a need for access to accommodations and modifications for the deaf population navigating the justice system. The ISE team will host a screening of “Deaf in Prison” on October 22nd with the goal of increasing awareness about the need for services for this population, and increasing others’ desire to help advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves. For more information about the Social Exclusion Simulation or the upcoming “Deaf in Prison” film screening, contact us at ISE@adler.edu.
Project Update: HIA in Chicago’s Pilsen and Little Village Neighborhoods

For the past year, the Institute on Social Exclusion (ISE) has conducted a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) in Chicago’s Pilsen and Little Village neighborhoods to examine land use options and potential health impacts of Fisk and Crawford coal plants that were decommissioned in 2012. The goal of the HIA is to determine the health impacts of redeveloping the former plant sites into open space. The ISE partnered with community stakeholders in Pilsen and Little Village to utilize their presence within the community and encourage residents to provide their lived experiences, to help create informed recommendations.

To better engage and inform the community about the project, the ISE team trained community partners on research methods prior to the start of data collection, to increase community involvement and trust within Little Village and Pilsen. The training program was ideal for the project because it taught community partners not only how to conduct ethical research, but also how to maintain privacy regulations. It also recognized community residents’ ability to contribute unique perspectives and make a significant contribution to the project as co-researchers. Once training was finished, participants were presented with certificates of completion for their efforts.

Brian Galaviz with Pilsen Alliance, one of the School’s community partners, highlighted the importance of community-based participation in research and recommendation development.

Galaviz also challenged the ISE and future researchers to “not just go into the community for research and publications, but also to follow through and work in the community to make real and lasting changes.” Acknowledging this challenge will prove useful in determining recommendations and taking HIA findings to policymakers and the new land owner.

Providing community stakeholders with adequate knowledge and skills of the HIA process helped to increase community involvement in research and increased community resident trust during focus groups and surveys. In addition to eight adults who were trained, five individuals under age 21 participated in youth training, and individually hosted four youth focus groups consisting of 29 individuals. This helped develop better understanding of the important youth perspective, encourage their participation, and foster long-term community engagement. Other groups of interest that participated in focus groups, surveys, and interviews included seniors, homeless individuals, parents, small business owners, undocumented individuals, and local officials. The process increased inclusiveness of ideas and perceptions when analyzing community resident perspectives.

HIA is a multistep process for which the ISE team has so far completed screening, scoping and assessment. The team is currently reporting and making recommendations on findings. Once the reporting and recommendation stage is concluded, the team will create a monitoring plan.

The qualitative results from focus groups and interviews have been analyzed using a phenomenological approach, though which researchers pulled and discussed important themes collected from the two communities. Community residents acknowledged that increased access to safe and maintained open space has the potential to increase family activity, decrease gang activity, develop community cohesion, preserve cultural heritage, and improve physical and mental health.

This information was presented to community residents and stakeholders at two Town Hall Meetings focused on gathering feedback and community input to drive HIA recommendations. This input will be used to reanalyze ISE findings before completing the final report, which will be presented to decision-makers. The HIA’s ultimate goal is to present community-informed recommendations in order to potentially impact community open space and land use decisions.

To learn more about the HIA project, contact us at ISE@adler.edu.
A Student’s Perspective

By Ana Diaz, Adler School Student, Master of Arts in Counseling: Specialization in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program

As part of my work-study role at the ISE, I participated in some of the community-based activities related to the Pilsen Little Village HIA. I spent time listening to community members concerns as part of the screening, scoping, and assessment steps of the HIA. I attended community meetings including some organized by community leaders, CAPS [Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy] meetings, a teen focus group, and a youth forum.

In many meetings, residents discussed gentrification, conflicts between old and new cultural traditions, and issues affecting undocumented individuals including healthcare, unemployment, education, deportation, and language barriers. They also discussed sexism, safety, and how family roles dictate use of spaces. In addition to social issues, they reported environmental issues including limited access to green space, clean air and water, proximity to pollution, and safety within green spaces. Residents commented on what having access to these green spaces could mean for the health of their communities.

I met many passionate individuals working to make their own neighborhoods better. I was especially interested in the involvement of youth. I witnessed many give their free time to learn about environmental justice and ask critical questions of their community. During my time working on the HIA, I witnessed the struggle to make everyone heard. This became apparent when different needs and desires within the same community were voiced. Even within communities, there are structures of power that affect who gets heard and who does not.

One time at a public library, I attended a small meeting attended by mostly women. All were encouraged to share as they discussed the important issues of the community—jobs, street cleaning, housing, and mistrust of their local government. They talked about their past successes in fighting for a library and safe spaces for families to gather, such as classrooms and parks. They discussed how, often, decisions made about the spaces in their community were made without consulting the community first.

The HIA and the work of the ISE bridges the gap between community members and outsiders who are making decisions that affect those communities. What I valued most from the project was being a bridge. In a youth group meeting, a teenage girl asked us why we were working on the project. After listening to our answer, she stated: “So you guys don’t just come here and write what you see—you write what we tell you about our lives.”

Yes. The difference here is critical. As an outsider, we have to acknowledge the limits of what we can know about a community without being a part of it, and having history and experience with it. I believe this is a limitation that is not considered in many policy decisions. The ISE attempts to be a light that draws attention to this by allowing the community to be its own experts, and then reporting the words of the community directly to policymakers. I feel most proud of the ISE’s efforts to engage, locate, and honor even the most vulnerable voice and amplify them to the same volume as those with the most power.

Depression and Anxiety: Implications for the Little Village Elderly

By Julissa M. Pagán-Pena, Adler School Student, Doctor of Psychology in Clinical Psychology (Psy.D.) program

In connection with our work in Chicago’s Pilsen and Little Village communities, the ISE hosted an event on depression and anxiety with elderly residents in Little Village. This initiative emerged after conducting a focus group for the ISE’s HIA project at which participants expressed concerns about depression and anxiety symptoms, and a lack of resources to manage the onset of this symptomatology. They requested information about these symptoms, particularly strategies to cope. In collaboration with The Resurrection Project, one of the ISE’s community partners, and St. Agnes of Bohemia, the ISE team planned an event for July 31 to deliver information about depression and anxiety symptoms to elderly residents from Little Village.

The first phase of planning entailed collecting data and relevant articles about depression in the elderly population. The second phase involved translating information into Spanish, as this group only speaks Spanish. For the purpose of this program, it was important to not only educate them about symptoms, but also provide mental health resources available to them. The third phase of this program was to identify and contact mental health service providers. Lastly,
brochures were developed in both English and Spanish that included information on how to contact mental health service providers.

There were approximately 30 to 35 participants at the July 31 event. This presentation focused on identifying and describing the depressive symptoms based on the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition* (DSM-5). The presentation focused on symptoms particular to elderly people. Research suggests that elderly people may manifest depressive symptoms differently from others, which can lead to misdiagnosis. For instance, elderly patients with depressive symptoms may report somatic complaints for which clinicians do not have an explanation. Thus, the elderly may somatize their emotional distress. Furthermore, some stress factors are particular to Hispanic/Latino immigrants such as Mexican Americans. Acculturation has been identified as one of the factors that could cause significant psychological and emotional distress for the Hispanic/Latino elderly community.

Most participants expressed being motivated to use the resources we provided. This was the ultimate goal of the program. The program became very emotional at times for a few participants. Depressive symptoms were expressed by participants crying and requesting help with dealing with their symptoms. Some stated that they did not know about any Spanish psychological services available for them prior to our presentation. This suggested the barrier that language presents for people.

The group expressed their appreciation for the presentation and how good they felt afterwards. Further programs targeting communities with limited access to educational information and mental health resources should be developed since there is an obvious need.

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**Feria del Mole**

*By Meredith Chambers, Adler School Student, Masters of Arts in Counseling: Specialization in Forensic Psychology program*

The ISE is excited to take part in this year’s Feria del Mole festival on September 27 at Little Village High School in Chicago’s Little Village Lawndale neighborhood. The festival gives individuals an opportunity to showcase their culinary abilities, while also bringing the traditional Mexican dish of mole to the community.

The festival was born of a conversation among survivors of domestic violence with a women’s empowerment program at Universidad Popular, an ISE community partner. After a discussion on low self-esteem and limited job skills, the women discovered that they all had an impressive talent—cooking the traditional Mexican sauce mole. In an effort to encourage the women’s sense of empowerment and self-efficacy, Universidad Popular hosted a small competition to see who could make the best dish. It is a thriving celebration of both women and men’s culinary prowess and ability to connect good food with friends and neighbors, featuring about 30 to 40 moleras and reaching about 2,000 participants a year.

The Feria del Mole embodies Universidad Popular’s overall mission to work with, by, and for the people, particularly Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants living in Little Village. Feria del Mole is an exciting and rich event that brings a classic staple of Mexican culture right here to the neighborhood.

*Lillia Segoviano*, the LETOS [Learning to Succeed] Coordinator at Universidad Popular, described the focus that the Feria del Mole brings to tradition, culture, and community connection. She stated that the festival is a good opportunity to become involved with the community.

The ISE team will be at the festival this year to distribute information on the findings from its HIA project in Little Village and Pilsen, and cultivate more community partnerships within Little Village. We are thrilled about the opportunity to work so closely with community members in Little Village and look forward to attending this exciting festival!
State Senator Hunter’s Health Fair Prepares Families for Back-to-School Season

The Adler School ISE was a proud sponsor of Illinois Sen. Mattie Hunter and the Institute for Positive Living’s 11th Annual Health, Fun & Fitness Fair held Aug. 2.

Children, families, and residents filled Illinois Institute of Technology’s campus to receive free health screenings before the new school year. Health fair highlights included book bag and supply giveaways, and a touching ceremony for breast cancer awareness. Hunter, surrounded by 3rd District residents, released light pink balloons in honor of women and men who have succumbed to the disease.

The internationally known Jesse White Tumbling Team performed acrobatics for the excited crowd. Children participated in fun activities, while seniors relaxed in the air-conditioned pavilion. Neighbors treated the health fair like a block party, as they listened to music and enjoyed food. Booths lined the field as children hula-hooped and enjoyed the summer weather.

Senator Mattie Hunter and Lenny Asuncion, Adler School Associate Director of Admissions

ABOUT THE INSTITUTES

Institute on Social Exclusion

The Adler School Institute on Social Exclusion (ISE) advances the understanding that societal structures and systems including laws, public policies, and institutional behaviors, lead to unjust social outcomes – and that reconstituting them can achieve social justice and health equity. Our work is to ensure that all members of society have safe housing, quality education and healthcare, fair terms of employment, nutritious food, personal safety, and judicial equity.

The ISE recognizes those who have advanced our work through their generous support:

- The American Psychological Association
- The Chicago Community Trust
- The Field Foundation of Illinois
- The JCCC Foundation
- The W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- The Kresge Foundation
- The Pierce Family Foundation
- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- The Spencer Foundation
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, SAMHSA
- U.S. Department of Justice

For more information about the ISE, email us at ISE@adler.edu.
Institute on Public Safety and Social Justice

The Adler School Institute on Public Safety and Social Justice (IPSSJ) is dedicated to providing socially just solutions to public safety challenges. Through creative collaboration with community groups, peer institutions, and systems partners to address public safety challenges, the IPSSJ and its partners devise empirically sound methods beyond mere suppression to create environments enabling a more lasting and meaningful sense of peace and wellness can prevail. IPSSJ believes that through collaboration, human potential and community wellness can be enhanced, and urban safety outcomes can be improved.

The work of the IPSSJ has been made possible through generous support of:

- Community Justice for Youth Institute
- Enlace Chicago
- The Field Foundation of Illinois
- Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA)/Chicago Area Project
- U.S. Department of Justice
- Woods Fund Chicago
- YMCA

For more information about the IPSSJ, email us at IPSSJ@adler.edu.

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