

2020-2021 STUDENT FIELD PLACEMENT AND COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

Student hands-on
projects in public
health organizations
around the region



Northwest Center
FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE

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2020-2021 Field Placement Project Summaries



Silke Akerson

OHSU-PSU (Oregon Health & Science University and Portland State University)

Community Birth Transfer Improvement Initiative

Partners: Oregon Perinatal Collaborative (OPC)

With the Oregon Perinatal Collaborative, Silke worked with a workgroup of more than 40 physicians, midwives, nurses, and administrators to create a statewide community birth to hospital transfer improvement program. Four pilot hospitals have enrolled in the program and there is a plan for recruiting others in the future. The program is poised to make a difference in the outcomes and experience of care for people who plan a community birth as well as hospital providers and community midwives.



Jonathan Argyle

Idaho State University

Gap Analysis & Program Evaluation to Address Suicide in Idaho

Partners: Idaho Central Health District

Jonathan developed a gap analysis of needs assessments in suicide prevention and a program evaluation plan for the QPR (question, persuade, refer) Suicide Prevention Training with the Idaho Central Health District. The health district can use and adapt the evaluation plan to meet its needs in future training and program evaluations. And the findings from the gap analysis offer invaluable data that will support the health district's strategic planning in suicide prevention.



Shafaq Babar

University of Washington

Providing Nutritious Food to Rural Washington Communities During a Pandemic: How COVID-19 Affects Food Bank Visitors & Volunteers

Partners: Sequim Food Bank

Shafaq determined the sociodemographic, self-rated health, barriers, state of child and household food insecurity, and the effect of COVID-19 mitigation strategies on the lives of food bank visitors and operations. The results of the project show an increasing number of new visitors coming to the Sequim Food Bank and an opportunity to collaborate with partner organizations to address food quality and waste.

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Conor Foley

Oregon State University

Using Virtual Structured Interviews to Gather Community Feedback on Policies to Reduce Sugary Drink Consumption

Partners: Healthy Active Oregon Coalition

Conor collaborated with community partners to help identify target populations and recruit participants for structured interviews, analyze qualitative data collected from the interviews, and report the findings to project partners. The project expanded the local networks and statewide coalition working to reduce consumption of sugary drinks. It also provided valuable community insights that will help inform equitable policy action.



Amy Gallagher

University of Washington

Accessing Social Security for People with Disabilities Who Are Experiencing Homelessness in Seattle

Partners: Seattle Housing and Resource Effort (SHARE), Women's Housing, Equality and Enhancement League (WHEEL), and the Nickelsville community

The project goal was to understand the unique barriers to Social Security Disability access for people experiencing homelessness and understand why so many people who qualify struggle to access needed benefits. The challenges of experiencing both homelessness and a serious disability are in and of themselves barriers. These findings will help partners advocate for policy and programmatic solutions to support people with disabilities experiencing homelessness.



Katherine Ly

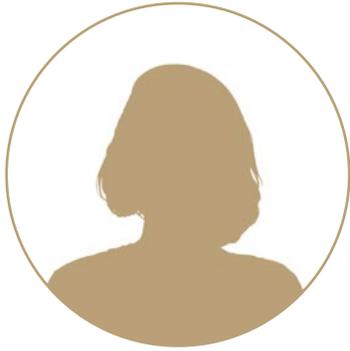
University of Washington

Mental Health Care at Odessa Brown Children's Clinic Amidst Gentrification & Displacement in South Seattle

Partners: Odessa Brown Children's Clinic (Seattle Children's Hospital)

South Seattle community members face gentrification and displacement, as well as fear of displacement, that deteriorates individual and family health by inducing social, physical, psychological, and economic pressures. What Katherine discovered through online surveys was that while telehealth can help overcome geographic barriers for displaced families, it is not a replacement for the community connection and solidarity that in-person services provide. These findings will help staff better advocate for the resources needed to support families and their mental health.

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Colleen McCarty

University of Washington

Public Mourning of Homeless Deaths in King County, Washington

Partners: Women's Housing Equality and Enhancement League (WHEEL)

Colleen explored the role public mourning plays in advocating for policy change, along with honoring the people whose unjust deaths are often overlooked by society. This project centered the voices of Black women who have experienced homelessness and their knowledge on the threats to health and well-being from homelessness. The project situated vigils within a larger framework of advocacy and community organizing for the prevention of homeless deaths. The project also provided a record of the experiences of vigil participants, including what motivates them and what they see as the benefits of the vigils.



Taylor Munro

Oregon State University

Assessing Community Member Risk Perceptions of Using Reusable Serving Ware During COVID-19

Partners: Marion County Environmental Services

Taylor examined public perceptions of reusable serving ware during COVID-19 in Marion County, Oregon. The 682 responses from a community member survey revealed how many thought it was safe to use a restaurant's reusable serving ware. Taylor recommended one notable safety measure that several restaurants now use when customers can place their own mug or cup on a counter — a contactless pour where servers pour a beverage without touching the mug or cup. The contactless pour is a good administrative control to use during flu season and virus outbreaks.



Amanda Shi

University of Washington

Resource Utilization by Users of Seattle Fire Department's Health One Program & Possible Policy Implications

Partners: Seattle Fire Department

Amanda created two products for Health One — a policy brief based on two years of case notes and an interview questions guide for interviews with members of the crew. She found a major shortage of resources available for social services, while there are extremely complex patient needs, often with multiple dimensions including mental health, substance use disorder, chronic conditions, and shelter needs. The policy brief outlined recommendations on improving the resource utilization of Health One and ways to support clients.

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Yachana Bhakta

OHSU-PSU (Oregon Health & Science University and Portland State University)

Facing the Facts on Firearm Injuries: Preventing Firearm Injuries in Oregon Through Dissemination of Surveillance Data & Community Engagement

Partners: Injury & Violence Prevention Program (Oregon Health Authority, Public Health Division)

While firearm injuries are a significant public health issue in Oregon, there has been limited availability of nonfatal firearm injury data for community partners. Yachana engaged partners to identify their data needs and interests, assisted in developing a data dissemination plan, and analyzed nonfatal firearm injury data from Oregon ESSENCE (Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-Based Epidemics) according to community partner needs.



Miranda Delawalla

University of Washington

Effect of COVID-19 on Adolescent Substance Use & Mental Health: A Literature Review & Survey-Based Descriptive Analysis

Partners: Seattle Children's Hospital

Miranda conducted a scoping review, compiled a set of relevant resources, and designed a survey-based study to understand the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on adolescent social media use, substance use, and depressive symptoms. The preliminary findings of this scoping review were used to inform a list of resources for the Adolescent Medicine Clinic of Seattle Children's Hospital website.



Stefani Florez-Acevedo

University of Washington

Compre Saludable/Shop Healthy in King County, Washington

Partners: Public Health - Seattle & King County

The study team identified challenges small, Latin food stores faced during the pandemic and developed and evaluated a toolkit for operating safely during a pandemic. Stefani helped form collaborations between partnering organizations and store owners and managers. She also conducted pre- and post-interviews in Spanish with owners and managers.

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KeliAnne Hara-Hubbard

University of Washington

Impact of COVID-19 on Community Organizations Serving Older Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders

Partners: Asian American Resource and Information Network, Inc.

KeliAnne collaborated with community organizations serving older Asian Americans during the pandemic to see what these organizations needed and how their needs were evolving during COVID-19. While hate crimes against Asian Americans have been receiving more attention, systemic barriers to basic services continue. The project findings informed a presentation to local government leaders that will be shared with the community to help advocate for more inclusive policies.



Evelyn Le

University of Washington

Informational Bridge Fall Prevention

Partners: Fall Prevention Clinic at Harborview Medical Center

Family and friends can use motivational interviewing skills with older adults to put fall prevention methods into action. To support people in using this skill, Evelyn designed a virtual training workshop. The hour-long training focuses on helping people understand the benefits of talking with older adults about fall prevention, how to engage older adults in thinking about or applying home safety principles, and how to apply communication strategies for motivational interviewing.



Molly Reid

University of Washington

Harm Reduction Experiences & Needs of People in the Seattle Area Who Co-Use Methamphetamine & Heroin

Partners: Public Health – Seattle & King County

In preparation for a larger study about harm reduction for people who co-use methamphetamine and heroin, Molly completed a literature review, identified key questions for future interviews with people who co-use, and developed an interview guide. The reviewed literature raised concern about how existing treatment programs for opioids are interacting with, and in many cases, actually increasing methamphetamine use. The larger study will expand on these issues in the interviews by asking participants about their treatment experiences and needs.

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Mariah Seater

University of Alaska

My Best Life: A Youth-Designed Tool for Improving Sexual & Mental Health in Alaska

Partners: Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies

Mariah supervised and mentored youth research interns, facilitated youth focus groups and coordinated the advisory group that helped inform the research methods of this project. Focus groups provided insight into strategizing what is most important for the research project, the importance of asking the audience clear questions, and allowing the community to claim ownership of the process from start to finish. Youth input and feedback shaped the Reproductive Life Plan tool for Alaska youth, which is titled "My Best Alaskan Life."



Katherine Spears

University of Washington

Adult Day Center Staff: Supporters or Dissuaders of Increased Supportive Care

Partners: Old Friends Club

Katherine interviewed staff members who work with older adults with dementia to learn about their experiences and perspectives. The project goals were to understand how adult day care staff members affect caregivers' decision-making process for transitions in care, how staff members' roles changed during COVID-19, and what varying knowledge adult day care staff members have of Washington State requirements. This project confirms the importance of adult day care for not only the caregiver but the individual with dementia.



Genevieve (Gray) Taylor

University of Washington

COVID-19 Effects on Sexual & Reproductive Health Services in King County, Washington

Partners: University of Washington

Gray discovered that while there was more than a 13% reduction in sexual and reproductive health appointments, the timeframe of the pandemic and type of service affected appointments. There was a 53% decrease in appointments in the first few months of the pandemic, compared to a 5% increase in the last few months of the study period. There was a 26% decrease in HPV vaccinations, compared to a 15% increase in HIV screenings. Interventions to reduce health disparities can include expanding telehealth services and legislative reform to make services such as medication abortion and STI self-testing legal and affordable.

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Diana Tordoff

University of Washington

Community Advisory Board for Understanding HIV Prevalence & Prevention Among Transgender & Non-binary Adults in Seattle

Partners: Public Health – Seattle & King County

Diana collaborated to convene a community advisory board to better understand HIV and STI prevention for transgender and non-binary people and their partners. Because the board felt the existing data on the transgender and non-binary community in King County are extremely limited, they developed questions Public Health – Seattle & King County will add to its 2021 Pride Survey. Questions were about food insecurity, preferences about where and from whom they receive health care, experiences of discrimination in health care, barriers to accessing gender-affirming medical treatments, and resilience.

The Northwest Center for Public Health Practice is housed within the University of Washington School of Public Health. It is one of ten regional Public Health Training Centers funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration.

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