

Substance use and Intergenerational Trauma Social Processes (SITS) Lab

The Substance use and Intergenerational Trauma Social processes (SITS) Lab explores the interpersonal (e.g., intersectional microaggressions, social support, family socialization, cultural socialization, meaning-making, subjective appraisal, community connectedness) and institutional/systemic (e.g., colonization, cultural dispossession, institutional oppression) social processes underlying substance use and intergenerational trauma among marginalized populations (e.g., BIPOC folks, LGBTQ+ BIPOC folks). We take a social constructionist and critical psychology approach, grounding our explorations with the assumption that knowledge co-constructed based on individuals' social contexts and positionality in the world. We predominately use critical qualitative research methodologies (e.g., constructivist grounded theory, reflexive thematic analysis, ethnography, interpretive phenomenological analysis, community based participatory action research, photovoice).

Our goals are to reconceptualize substance use and intergenerational trauma in relation to the historical conditions that inform them for marginalized communities to better inform communal healing. We aim to do community-informed work and will partner with local organizations in the Bay Area to prioritize the elevation of community voices rather than doing research that remains in the ivory tower.

Current/Future Research Areas

An interpretive phenomenology study of how individuals who descend from peoples who have experienced colonization, enslavement, or genocide understand, experience, and express their gender and sexual orientation identities

An inductive content analysis of multicultural integration among APA accredited predoctoral internship sites with substance use tracks or rotations

Future research concerning individuals' experiences bringing up experiences of intergenerational trauma in therapy

Future research concerning mental health professionals' case conceptualization skills concerning intergenerational trauma

Future research on cultural messaging concerning alcohol use and harm reduction

Training Opportunities

Conducting literature reviews, IRB preparation, recruitment

Learning about qualitative research methodologies and study design

Furthering one's insights and self-reflection on how their social positioning, social context, and epistemological assumptions inform all aspects of research

Presenting at conferences and co-authoring manuscripts

Gaining mentorship experience of junior students

Pursuing your own research projects under the mentorship of the team when you are ready to do so

Research Mentorship/Team Culture

Paying it forward – the goal of working toward becoming an independent research scholar is to mentor the next generation of scholars. In the words of the late Toni Morrison, “The function of freedom is to free someone else”.

Co-construction/collectivism over toxic hyper-individualism – the team is a space of collaboration and no one person’s voice is more important than anyone else’s.

Meeting people where they are – it is ok to not know things! Asking questions, intellectual and cultural humility, and being in a stage of growing is not only encouraged, but also celebrated.

How to Apply

Send current CV, unofficial PAU transcript, cover letter detailing fit with SITS team and goals (and any experience using qualitative research methodologies), and contact information of two references to Satveer at skler@paloaltou.edu

Satveer will invite selected students to 1:1 interview with Satveer and students will also have a group interview with existing students in the SITS team (without Satveer)

Lab selection will follow all established PAU guidelines and students will be notified on PAU uniform notification date via email.

Questions?

Feel free to email Satveer at skler@paloaltou.edu with any questions.